

OUR CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—I cannot allow your excellent article "On the Choice of a Course of Study" to pass by me unnoticed, being one of the youthful students to whom it is more particularly directed; not but what I think many of our brother architects, who are more advanced in the art, may gather an excellent lesson therefrom, to steer their course in the wide ocean, without always referring, as it were, to the compass to direct them, which is decidedly the case with many. You will no doubt think this very presumptuous of me, but my inducement to write this is from your having observed that it reads with us to decide the style of forthcoming centuries.

Are we to be mere copyists of what has been before written, published, and erected? No, this will not lead us to vie with our ancestors in introducing new styles, ornaments, plans, and elevations. We must not sit down in despair, and imagine that all has been done for the art that can. Let us, my fellow students, rouse ourselves from our lethargy, sink deeply into the mine of invention, see whether there be left a particle or an atom of some gem which has not been favoured with the light of the sun, raise it from thence, fashion and form it into the shape our minds are best able, and lastly lay it before the public for their approval; such, I imagine, to be a mode towards obtaining another order or style. Let us put on the breast-plate of diligence and perseverance, let our helmets be ornamented with discretion, our shield bearing the motto "*good possum perficere*," our loins girt with brotherly charity, our feet shod with strenuousness and firmness; clad thus, let us go forth into the grand arena with undaunted and never-failing spirit, bearing in our hands the spear of determination to overcome all difficulties.

Although as yet neither a second Shakespeare, Milton, or Chaucer has risen to pen such beautiful lines, nor in architecture a Wren, Jones, or Michelangelo, still there are no gospel reasons why the sixteenth century should not be favoured by bringing one to light. Therefore, let us be eager to obtain the prize of having our names banded down to posterity, and render ourselves worthy of our vocation. On whatever side we turn, we behold the ingenuity of man causing something new to spring forth in connection with us: the varieties of ways of cutting wood, enriched with mouldings by machinery—the Patent Wood Carving Company for stamping it to any pattern; the Iron Mason, &c., combined with various others that have appeared, and some which will soon tend to render the art more practicable, less expensive, and consequently the more to be patronized.

As this letter is composed by a youthful member, some allowance be therefore made for what errors and wrong notions he may have fallen into, and will esteem it a great favour by any one giving him a word of advice thereon.

Tho' rugged the way and steep the hill,
Still let us endeavour our post to fill.

I must apologize for the length of my letter, having exceeded the limits I first thought of when I set out, but my love for the art has carried me on. Your pages, I doubt not, can be better filled than with this, but should it meet with your approbation, and you have space left, by the insertion of it you will greatly oblige—

A YOUNG STUDENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—Having seen No. 10 of THE BUILDER, and the wish of a Young Joiner to be informed whether there is a machine for cutting tenons, and thinking you may not know, I take the liberty of sending to inform you that there is one, I am sorry to say it is in Pimlico. The inventor is a cabinet-maker—his name is Harrington. He began one for Messrs. Webb, builders, but failed to bring it to perfection. He then went to Mr. Jackson, I believe, and got one to work; it worked with a sliding table; at the end of the table are two iron cylinders about eight inches in diameter, and in each cylinder three iron, like plane irons, and in the front of each iron one cutting tooth. The cutting teeth cut the shoulder, and the iron plane the tenons as they revolve. I saw the one at Messrs. Webb's, and had to alter the tenons, for it made shocking work of it. He likewise has invented a machine to mortice, and I saw a specimen of his mortices, and they are good; he says he can mortice a plank eleven inches deep with it; the one I saw was as true as a hair. If this is of any use to you, I shall be happy to send any information at any time that will be of service to my trade. I am happy that such a work has made its appearance, for, in my humble opinion, it will be of great service. I intend to have the back

numbers, and shall continue them, and should be happy if every other joiner would do the same.

P.S.—I forgot to say that the cylinders worked one on the top and the other underneath, so that both sides of the tenon are cut at one time. A rail, nine inches wide, has the tenons cut in one minute's time. I would send you a drawing of it, but the space can be taken up with more valuable matter.

I remain your well-wisher to THE BUILDER.
April 16th, 1843. T. C., A JOINER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—It is said that a preparation of gas tar, refuse lime and coarse sand will, when fermented together, form a waterproof, very hard, and durable floor for out-houses, cottages, or even tanks. Do you know this preparation, and can you tell me the proper proportions?

I am, Sir, faithfully yours,
Warrham, April 8, 1843. EDIFICANE.

WOOD PAVEMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

ATTENTION has been forcibly directed to the contents of Mr. Blackie's letter inserted in your last (9th) number.

Surely nothing can tend more to retard the progress of wood-paving than the course adopted by Mr. Blackie. If one reason more than another would weigh against noticing this production, it is that of depriving it of greater notoriety. Your readers, however, are entitled to correct information which Mr. Blackie's letter fails to convey. On the contrary, the argument is begun, carried out, and ends on the *ne plus ultra* of Mr. Stead's patent, an argument altogether inconsistent with the true position of the various plans of wood-paving now under trial by the public.

Mr. Blackie labours hard in the use, or rather the abuse, of certain names, to warn the public that eventually, by the effect of a judgment from the highest judicial court, these parties and their pretensions will be set aside to make way for Mr. Stead. Mr. Blackie must be well aware all the while that the prospect of any such result is most remote; nay more, that Mr. Stead takes no step that can lead to any legal result whatever!

Public opinion has been emphatically expressed in favour of certain plans of wood-paving, and these not Mr. Stead's! Does Mr. Blackie suppose that the public is to wait for the settlement of all the questions as to right of priority (between the wood-paviors themselves) ere it proceed with the adoption of those plans which have been found efficient after long trial?

Or does that gentleman wish to set up a claim to the alternative of Mr. Stead, or his licensee, to be, in the meantime, exclusively employed to lay down wood, according to any plan, beyond as well as within the scope of Mr. Stead's specifications?

Or, seeing that notwithstanding the serious obstruction to wood pavement, arising as much through the controversies of the patentees as from the effects of a deep-seated and interested opposition, the public will yet have wood-paving, and will not defer to Mr. Stead, is it, Sir, I ask, the object of Mr. Blackie to prevent any other party from enjoying that patronage which he is making such strenuous exertions to obtain?

Of these exertions no one would have a right to complain if the advocacy of Mr. Stead's plan were unalloyed with so large a mixture of invective against those persons who represent the more successful plans.

The innuendo with reference to the Marylebone vestry, may be answered by observing with Mercury, "a plague on both your houses." The committee (the information is derived from the most authentic source) were heartily sick of the violence of antagonism exhibited on the occasion referred to. The gentleman with whose name Mr. Blackie is so familiar, had no means of obtaining a favourable report from his employers except on the merits of their plan.

For aught that is known to the contrary, the Metropolitan Company's Incorporation Act may be quietly reposing on the shelf near Mr. Stead's action in the Supreme Court of Judicature, and the notice of trial "*In re Sanders*" may be slumbering by their side! But, in sooth, what have the ratepayers, who desire to have wood-paving before their doors, to do with all this?

With regard to the case of "*Macnamara*," Lord Abinger never ruled that he (Macnamara) had a prior right. His lordship put a case upon hypothesis which would have left the jury free to return a verdict for the defendants in a way that may be practically demonstrated hereafter in another case!

It is scarcely necessary to ask the judgment of your readers on the specimens of wood-pavement alluded to. If, by the comparison, other persons can come to the same conclusions which your correspondent has arrived at, Mr. Blackie will hence-

forth find much more profitable employment than in publishing writings calculated to damage the very cause they were probably intended to advance.

I should be sorry to add my name to the list of controversialists, and therefore shall adopt a signature for the moment, confiding my address to your discretion, and subscribing myself,

Your obedient servant,
London, April 12th, 1843. CASSIO.

ALMSHOUSES, CAMBRIDGE.

Our building friends will perceive an advertisement in our columns to-day for fifteen almshouses to be contracted for at Cambridge. We have taken the trouble to inspect the drawings and specification, in order that we might save many from being put upon a wrong scent, so to speak, in ignorance of the nature or extent of the work to be contracted for; almshouses have in many instances been structures of an inferior class, and hardly worth the while of a respectable contractor to attend to; but in this case they are of a superior nature, and include other accessory works, so as to make the matter of tolerable consequence. Each house consists of two stories, and each story of a fair height and proportion; there is on the ground-floor a passage entrance, a good front parlour, a kitchen, a pantry, and a roomy staircase; the chamber-story consists of a good back and front room, the out-offices and courtyards are all laid out on a superior scale; these are points, we think, that are worth mentioning, and will form a guide to parties not immediately on the spot as to the prudence of their moving towards it. We shall be happy to give any further information impartially to all—and it may be that we may save some trouble to many, which we shall also be glad to do. Above all things, however, let us beg that none will put themselves out of the way to throw in a random tender, at a rate and price that is not based upon a defensible ground of calculation. We are quite aware that there may be great differences, to as much as five, or even ten per cent. between one man's power of accomplishing a work and another's, but when we come to see twenty-five per cent., and almost fifty per cent., as in the instance of two or three competitions which we have lately recorded, there must be something rotten, which an authority of some kind should take cognizance of, and inquire into. The architect in such cases is bound to inquire on the part of those for whom he is agent and steward, and he is bound also, for the sake of the profession, and of the class with whom he is allied, by every honourable tie, to inquire, we say, as to the grounds upon which some of those extraordinary discrepancies occur, and if he finds error or carelessness, to interpose with strong authority. Better this, arbitrary as it may appear, than the thousandfold injury which his indifference may result in. How many contractors would have had their best friend in such an architect? How many employers would have been spared pain, loss, and constant annoyance? and how much credit would have been saved to the profession and the building class? We throw these remarks out in a kind and friendly spirit, convinced that it is for the general benefit to give heed to them. Bad work, low wages, insufficient profits, go together. On the other hand, exorbitant profits are not pleaded, and we have no fair-dealing man of our class who requires them. Again, we say, "Live, and let live!"

A public-spirited individual, Mr. Thompson, watch and clock maker, of Shoane Street, has gone to a very considerable expense in erecting a handsome clock in front of his house between Harriet Street, Lowndes Square, and Cadogan Place; it projects five feet from the front of the house, about twenty feet from the ground. It consists of two elegantly carved scroll-work trusses of bronze supporting two dials (facing up and down the street) of slate enamelled with gold letters burnt in, the hands and rim gilded. The whole weight of the clock, trusses, &c., is not less than half a ton. Many have been the inquiries as to how it is to be wound up, &c. Now the fact is, the clock-work is in the shop window, the pendulum being suspended from the breastplate. There is also an index-hand, so that it will be wound up and set from thence. Now such a public-spirited man deserves to be supported for his liberality in having erected such a public convenience regardless of expense.